

64-6671

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** General Earle G. Wheeler  
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

**SUBJECT :** 1964 NESC Report

**REFERENCE :** Memo for Mr. McCone from Chairman, JCS, dated  
21 Sept 64, Same Subject (CM-142-64)

I concur in principle with your proposed letter to Mr. Bundy. However, I would suggest that a reference to briefing the President be inserted in the letter. This would serve to remind Mr. Bundy that this has been the normal manner of presentation of NESC reports in past years.

**JOHN A. MCCONE**  
Director

O/DDI:DRH:eh (7 Oct 64)  
Distribution:

Orig & 1 - Addressee  
1 - Signer  
1 - ER w/Basic (TS 0038352) ✓  
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**CONCUR:**

151

JCS review(s)  
completed.

JCS

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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

DDI-3811-64

CM-142-64  
21 September 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR; Mr. John A. McCone

SUBJECT: 1964 NESC Report

In forwarding this year's NESC Report to the White House, I would like to include an explanation of its scope and limitations. A draft letter which is intended to accomplish this is inclosed for your consideration. If the members of the sub-committee agree, I will forward this letter and the report to Mr. Bundy.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Earle G. Wheeler", is positioned above the typed name.

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
NET EVALUATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Dear Mr. Bundy:

The 1964 report of the Net Evaluation Subcommittee (NESC) of the National Security Council has been completed and is forwarded herewith. This year's analysis differs in major respects from the reports of previous years, which were devoted primarily to assessing the effects on the US and USSR of massive nuclear exchanges between the two countries. The objective of the 1964 task was, in effect, an assessment of US "crisis management" capabilities in the event of hostilities at various scales of intensity between the US and the USSR. Specifically, the NESC was asked to consider: (1) the manner in which a war between the US and USSR might be initiated, (2) the factors -- political, military and economic -- affecting decisions at critical points in the war, particularly during the early phases of hostilities, and (3) the effects on the US, its allies, and the USSR of actions resulting from such decisions. The report's over-all purpose was to evaluate the validity and feasibility of this type of analysis as a basis for providing guidance for political-military planning and to assist in identifying and evaluating the risks inherent in various alternative courses of action in presently approved operational war plans.

The NESC staff, to complete the report within the time allotted, chose to narrow the scope of analysis. It discussed methods of assuring more complete guidance to the military planner; however, it concentrated on an appraisal of the suitability and adequacy of existing NATO war plans, command/control processes, and military capabilities to respond to USSR-initiated conventional and limited nuclear attacks against the Alliance; and it explored the military aspects of such situations more fully than the diplomatic ones. Finally, it focused on the identification and examination of elements influencing military decisions rather than on the timing and possible consequences of critical decisions. Even so circumscribed, the NESC task nonetheless addressed one of the most complex -- if not the most complex -- of all the areas of Free World political-military planning. Military technology, geography, population distribution, and alliance politics have all combined to make the decisions on going to war, and on the early type and scale of combat, the most difficult and fundamental ones the NATO member governments must take.

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The evaluation brought out clearly that because of the complexity and the changing nature of the NATO defense posture some significant problems remain unresolved. Specifically, the report underscores the risks and dilemmas to the Alliance due, in part, to the restricted flexibility of SACEUR's forces, resulting from peacetime maldeployments, uncertain reinforcement capacity, the requirement to maintain a general war posture, and logistics limitations. Current ability to hold the conflict to a relatively low level of intensity, without the sacrifice of a major portion of the homelands of our allies, for a period sufficient to permit diplomacy even minimal opportunity to forestall irreversible escalation, must be assessed as limited and uncertain.

That the problems not yet solved are formidable and vital is well recognized by this Administration. As the report suggests, this is in fact an area which is being subjected to the most intensive military planning; in a number of major current projects, the requirements for effective and flexible military action of limited scope, responsive to direction from the highest levels of government, are being closely studied in the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The impediments and limitations that have been identified, both in the NESC report and in other studies; result principally from unresolved divergencies on the current NATO Strategic Concept, difficulties inherent in the military situation, in alliance operations, and in military technology.

Thus, the NESC's report this year serves both as an evaluation of existing NATO capabilities to conduct a defense against limited aggression in Europe and as a useful reminder of some unfinished tasks and current realities. Continued improvement is called for to see that the processes for the higher control of possible military action in Europe are quick-acting, flexible, and survivable, particularly during the early phases of any hostilities. This period will be marked by obscurity of enemy intentions and actions and great peril to our forces, yet it will be a time when an inadvertent signal to the enemy, or an unwanted escalation, could frustrate diplomatic negotiations for an acceptable settlement. It must be remembered, too, that the type of enemy attack in Europe -- its location, intensity, and objectives -- will be essential determinants of the NATO military response, and hence of the amount of time diplomacy may have to operate before hostilities intensify. Under certain circumstances, NATO could respond to a limited Soviet thrust with conventional means alone, and the better the preparations made, the more effective the defense would be. In other circumstances,

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limited nuclear operations could be required. For both of these modes of warfare, much preparatory work remains to be done. As a third possibility, governed strongly by the nature of the enemy attack, NATO could quickly be faced with the necessity of going at once to general war or failing to defend the territory of one or more of its members -- drastically foreshortening the time available for diplomatic negotiations. The decisions as to scale and tempo will not be made by NATO unilaterally; the Soviet Union, as noted will also be vitally involved. But NATO, by maintaining and strengthening its arms and its manifest readiness and determination to meet attack of any scale, can take major strides toward assuring that the Alliance can make an effective response to aggression, and can thereby strengthen the deterrent it poses to Soviet aggression. The NESC report reaffirms that such deterrence remains the capstone of NATO viability.

In summary, the 1964 NESC report provides a useful evaluation of our current capabilities to meet various forms of limited aggression in Europe, together with a contribution toward further identification of some specific areas for additional study and analysis. It would seem appropriate that you furnish the report to the Secretary of Defense for use by his Department as he deems appropriate. In this way the study results may be considered expeditiously in connection with related actions now under way within the Department of Defense.

For the Net Evaluation Subcommittee:

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman

The Honorable McGeorge Bundy  
Special Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
The White House

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64-667/1

30 September 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : General Wheeler's Letter Regarding the 1964 NESC Report

1. The attached suggested reply to Gen. Wheeler recommends that the draft letter to Mr. Bundy should not be sent. This recommendation is based on the view that the report of the NESC is intended specifically for the President, yet the letter does not indicate that the report will go to him. Rather, the final paragraph of the letter suggests that it is passed by Mr. Bundy to the Secretary of Defense. Also, the length of Gen. Wheeler's letter suggests perhaps that it can be read in place of the report. What his letter attempts to do is to minimize the impact of the problems discussed in the report. These problems have been recognized for some time but little constructive action has been taken to resolve them. The bringing of these problems directly to the President is in consonance with the charter of the NESC.

2. In establishing the NESC, President Eisenhower was seeking to gain an independent evaluation of US strategic capabilities vs. those of the Soviet Union. It was intended that this independent view would assist him in taking decisions with respect to security policy and budget proposals of the Department of Defense. The 1964 report, while not evaluating an intercontinental nuclear exchange, is nevertheless in a real sense a net evaluation of US policy, strategic concepts, and forces as they relate to several potential levels of war in the NATO area.

3. If the Chairman of the NESC believes that he, in his Joint Chiefs of Staff role, must comment on this and subsequent reports before they go the President, such comments could be attached. But if the reports are not to be given to the President, then the NESC is no longer performing its assigned mission. Either the NESC should be dissolved or its responsibilities and organization reconsidered.



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CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION	SIGNATURE

Remarks:

STAT  
I agree with the recommendation made by [ ] who is continuing to work informally with General Johnson on this matter, and suggest that the DCI not endorse General Wheeler's proposal. STAT

The Director, at his convenience, may want to discuss this matter with [ ] and myself.

STAT

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Deputy Director (Intelligence)		9/30/64
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**Remarks:**

To 2: For preparation of reply.

Suspense: 30 September 1964

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FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.

DATE

Execdirector(noted)

24 Sept 64